

### Introduction

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The Doctoral Track was launched (by the Graduate School and Staff Development - RREP) in February 2008 to provide support and structure for staff seeking to achieve a doctoral qualification whilst helping to achieve the KPI of 60% of BU's academic staff to hold doctoral qualifications by 2012 (*BU's Strategic Plan, 2007*). Staff completion rates at BU have improved dramatically in recent years, reflecting the changing academic focus at BU and staff motivation.

It is essential that there is consistency and clarity in the advice available to staff concerned with gaining doctoral qualifications in a climate where they see them as being increasingly essential to progression. The Graduate School Academic Board (October 2008) sought to provide clarification of the scheme's role and process and the role of the Graduate School, Staff Development and Academic Schools in the scheme. This document summarises the principle responsibilities of the Doctoral Track and its process, as well as a brief summary of key stakeholder roles. Those embarking on a doctoral qualification should also refer to the Code of Practice for Research Degrees and the guides/handbooks for non-traditional doctoral routes for insight into academic progression and guidance for completing a research degree.

### Responsibilities of Doctoral Track

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The three main aims of the Doctoral Track are:

1. To provide mentorship, support and guidance for staff who are undecided about the most appropriate doctoral route and monitor their progress through to formal registration (with nominated supervisors) on the identified programme of study. (Formal registration would normally be upon successful completion of the initial review (*c.* 8 months PT)).
2. To provide support, guidance and advice for staff undertaking a PhD by Publication whilst they analyse publications to date, compile additional publications prior to submission of their *prima facie* case.
3. To provide wider support and guidance for all BU staff engaged in doctoral research (at BU or externally), through the RREP programme.

All staff undertaking research degrees are *de facto* members of the Doctoral Track scheme but, if they are confident about their choice of doctoral route, they may register directly for their research degree following the traditional route without formally undertaking mentorship via the Doctoral Track.

For both routes, annual monitoring will be undertaken to ensure that sufficient progress is being made to continue on the Doctoral Track. Support will be provided by the Graduate School academic programmes and the Staff Development (RREP). Supervision will be provided by Academic Schools.

### Responsibilities of Key Stakeholders

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- The **Staff Member** embarking on the Doctoral Track is responsible for ensuring that their research meets the needs of their chosen doctoral route and accept that the onus is upon them to achieve their stated aim within a timely manner.
- The **Graduate School** is the gatekeeper of the scheme, provides informal, early stage advice about the Doctoral Track, access to Independent Advisors and wider support and guidance over the duration of the project through the academic programmes.
- **Staff Development** provides access to mentors, if appropriate, plus wider support through the Staff Development (and Releasing Research & Enterprise Potential)
- The **Academic Schools** provide academic support and supervision for staff, in line with the Codes of Practice, formal registration and progress monitoring.
- The **Independent Advisor** provides informed and independent advice to the staff member, assessing their skills and needs and helping to identify the most appropriate Doctoral Track route irrespective of School strategy.
- The **Supervisors** will have the relevant subject/discipline expertise and knowledge of those methodologies and skills required for the research and be responsible for providing support and guidance to the member of staff during the course of their doctoral research.

# The Doctoral Track Flowchart



